
Chapter 37

Argentina



Climate and Grape Growing

- Salta (N) → Rio Negro/Neuquen (S) - 1500km
- Altitude - most vineyards 600m+ (2000m+ near Salta)
- Heat = most vineyards planted in **Pergola System called Parral**
 - Grapes away from hot ground/shaded by leafy canopy
 - *Parral* still used for Torrontés but vertical trellises with shade for black grapes
- Andes = rain shadow - lack of rainfall common
 - Flood or drip (more common) irrigation used
 - Some water from mountain rivers or subterranean aquifers
- Spring frosts
- Summer hails (esp Mendoza) - netting to protect
 - Risk management = lots of different sites (also good for blending)
- No rot/mildew (due to heat)
- Organically grown grapes common

Grape Varieties and Wine Styles

Black grapes

Malbec (flagship/most planted)

- Low altitude = **full-bodied/rich black fruit/smooth tannins**
- High altitude = **elegant/fresher/floral**
- High quality - matured in new oak (spicy)/most gentle tannin extraction
- Single varietal (but can be blended with French international varieties)

Bonarda (2nd most planted)

- **Late ripening**
- **Deep colour/high acid/high tannin**
- High yield = **easy drinking/med-deep colour/raspberry/blackberry**
- Low yield = **greater concentration/structure**
- **Mendoza + San Joan**

White grapes

Torrontés

- **Salta/La Rioja/San Juan/Mendoza**
- High altitude = **Cafayete Region** (high quality)
- **Med-body + acid/fruity/floral/stone fruit/melon**
- Aromatic = ferm inert temp controlled vessels + released year of harvest

Chardonnay

- Premium = portion of matured in new oak

Chenin Blanc/SB/Semillon/Viognier also grown

Pedro Gimenez - cheap wine for domestic market/greatest white plantings

Regions and Wines

New world G1 system. 3 broad regions (only Patagonia seen on labels) → provinces → specific departments

Salta Province

- North-most vineyards
 - High altitude - 3000m
 - **Cafayete region = pure/concentrated Torrontes**
 - European investment due to high quality Torrontes
 - *Cab Sauv/Malbec* also planted
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La Rioja Province

- 3rd largest production
 - Famatina Valley (main area/usually labelled to avoid Rioja confusion) = irrigated valley floors
 - *Torrontes/Cab Sauv/Syrah/Bonarda*
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San Juan Province

- 2nd most important
 - 450-1,400m above sea level (altitude)
 - **Syrah** (quality)/ *Malbec/Cab Sauv/Bonarda*
 - *Chard/Viognier*
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Mendoza Province

- Majority of wine production
- Climate: **desert conditions** - rain shadow - Andes (east) and Argentine Pampas (west)
- Five divisions = Northern/Eastern/Central/Uco Valley/Southern
- **Northern/Eastern Mendoza**
 - High volume/inexpensive
 - Irrigation from Mendoza river

- **Central Mendoza**
 - High quality - esp. **Luján de Cayo**
 - 900-1100m high - foothills of Andes
 - Old **Malbec** vines = **soft/round/sweet spice**
 - **Maipú** (east of Lujan de Cayo)
 - Lower altitudes
 - **Syrah/Cab Sauv**
 - East/lower Maipu = high vol domestic + export. But old vine **Bonarda + Tempranillo** vines
 - **Uco Valley** (SW of Mendoza)
 - 900-1,500m (highest vineyards in Mendoza)
 - Cooling altitude at night = retain acidity/fresh fruit flavours
 - Tupungato (west) - high altitude - quality area too
 - *Chard/Torrontes/SB/Malbec/Cab Sauv/Tempranillo/PN*
 - **Southern Mendoza**
 - San Rafael department here
 - Low altitude/southernly - the coolest area
 - **Chenin Blanc** = significant plantings
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Patagonia Region

- Rio Negro + Neuquén Provinces
 - 200-250m but southernly latitude - desert winds
 - Low rainfall/wide diurnal range = low disease
 - **Concentrated fresh fruit flavours/med-high acid wines**
 - *SB/PN/Malbec/Merlot*
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Multiple Choice Practice Questions

1) Which of the following regions in Argentina is best known for its Malbec production?

- a) Mendoza
- b) Salta
- c) Patagonia
- d) San Juan

2) What is the primary cooling influence in the vineyards of Argentina?

- a) Atlantic Ocean
- b) Humboldt Current
- c) Andes Mountains
- d) Coastal Range

3) Which grape variety is most associated with the region of Cafayate in Argentina?

- a) Chardonnay
- b) Torrontés
- c) Merlot
- d) Syrah

4) What unique grape variety, often found in old vineyards, is making a resurgence in the Mendoza region?

- a) Cabernet Sauvignon
- b) Malbec
- c) Torrontés
- d) Bonarda

5) Which of the following is a significant characteristic of wines produced from the Torrontés grape in Argentina?

- a) High acidity and low tannins
- b) Floral aromas and tropical fruit flavours
- c) Light body and herbal notes
- d) High alcohol and jammy fruit flavours

Answers

1. a) Mendoza

2. c) Andes Mountains

3. b) Torrontés

4. d) Bonarda

5. b) Floral aromas and tropical fruit flavours